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## CONFUCIUS' ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

Dr. Chen Huan-Chang of Columbia University, New York, has given to the world a large and comprehensive treatise on the economic features of the Confucian philosophy.<sup>1</sup> It is in two volumes covering 756 octavo pages, printed and published last year by Columbia University and forming the 44th and 45th volumes of the series of "Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law." This treatise is of peculiar interest just at the present time, when China is entirely changing her old form of government and modeling a new one that is to incorporate whatever is found suitable or desirable in western systems. Equipped with a wide acquaintance with the English language, with a close familiarity with our western methods both ancient and modern, and with a good knowledge of the Confucian system, there is perhaps no one living who ought to be more eminently qualified to handle this timely and important subject.

Dr. Chen's publication bears on its surface many of the marks of ripe scholarship. He tells us in his preface that his treatise is "essentially a study, of the old régime in China" and is a "survey of the Chinese thought and Chinese institutions which developed independently of the Occident." He takes into consideration the teachings of Confucius as well as of his disciples through successive generations. For purposes of comparison he also refers to the opinions of the leaders of other Chinese schools of philosophy. He professes to base all his statements on the actual words of the texts or the spirit they embody. So far, so good.

Unfortunately the careful perusal of this work impresses one with the amount of oriental exaggeration with which it abounds, as well as with the curious conceit which characterizes many of its pages. A few instances may be selected here and there at random by way of illustrating these defects.

Dr. Chen tells us that his "is the first attempt to present the economic principles of Confucius and his school in a systematic form in any language." But very few of his readers who know anything of the subject will agree with such sweeping self-assertion which overlooks the writings of some of our best sinologues and authorities on Chinese affairs. Not only foreign writers, but even the long list of Chinese scholars who have labored in this direction both separately

<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Principles of Confucius and His School.* (Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University.) By Chen Huan-Chang. New York: Columbia University, Longmans, Green & Co., 1911. Vol. I, xv+362 pages; Vol. II, 363-756 pages.

and in encyclopaedias, are overlooked or at any rate regarded as not "systematic." Even some of the works he professes to have consulted are systematic enough in their way—although perhaps not in Dr. Chen's way. How about the elaborate compilations on this subject in the great Chinese encyclopaedia, the *T'u-shu-ch'i-ch'eng*? How about the recent exhaustive work by E. T. C. Werner, entitled *Descriptive Sociology* and covering the whole data of the Confucian system, classified and arranged in groups according to Herbert Spencer's direction? Surely this ponderous monument of diligent research is systematic enough for any ordinary mortal! But Dr. Chen evidently thinks otherwise. So much the worse for Dr. Chen.

After having summarily disposed of all competitors in the field, the author goes on to express his own views in an equally reckless manner. For instance, he tells us "there are two reasons why China has made so little progress for many centuries. These are the economic and the ethical reasons. Confucius teaches us to subject the former to the latter, and hence the Chinese people are ashamed to talk about money-making. They respect social order and public interest. Their competition in business is therefore not very sharp and moral influences still control their economic motives," etc. Now we all know that this statement is not borne out by facts. Money-making forms the continual subject of conversation among all classes. Walk behind a couple of Chinamen on the streets or go into the tea-shops and listen to the conversation that goes on. It would be something unusual not to hear the all-absorbing topic referred to. It is safe to say that competition is carried on in China to an extent and with a keenness that is not found in any other country. But Dr. Chen thinks differently. He lives in the ideal and ignores the real.

In another place he tells us that "Confucius is the founder of a new religion" and that he was "a great religious reformer who swept away the old and established the new." And yet Confucius himself tells us that he was not a founder but merely a transmitter and that he only handed down and emphasized the doctrines of the ancient sages. Dr. Chen furthermore makes Confucius say that man is not only the "Son of God" but also the "assistant and co-ordinate of God." Also that the most famous ruler of a dynasty is a "companion to God." In support of this view he mentions that in the *Analects* Confucius, by tacit implication, compares himself with God and that in the *Doctrine of the Mean* Confucius is called the "equal of God." Now the merest tyro knows that Confucius was too much of a philosopher to have ever expressed himself so foolishly. Dr. Chen has entirely misapplied

the words of the classics to suit his own purposes. This is far from being the only instance where he has done the same thing.

The rights of woman and the taxation of land values are two subjects which are handled by the author with the same disregard of the actual existing facts. But perhaps the most glaring defect in the whole of Dr. Chen's book is his tirade against Christianity, with which he concludes. He deliberately states that "China enjoys complete religious freedom"; while the "Sacred Edict," the Tientsin massacre, the Boxer outrages, and a long series of other disgraceful facts show the very opposite. He tells us that "all the good points of Christianity are found in Confucianism, and besides Confucianism gives still more. From the philosophical standpoint Christianity is not so deep or so rich as Confucianism, nor as Buddhism and Taoism. From the practical standpoint Christianity is not so human or so related to man as Confucianism. . . . It is opposed to the feelings of the people. In the first place it is antagonistic to their ancestor-worship. In the second place it has been introduced by arms, protected by treaties and extra-territoriality. . . . In the third place there are exceedingly few Chinese who honestly become Christians."

It is doing a real kindness to Dr. Chen and his readers to refer them to a book entitled *Letters to a Chinese Official, Being a Western View of Eastern Civilization*, by William Jennings Bryan. In that little treatise will be found a much better refutation of the views advanced by Dr. Chen than could be condensed into this short review.

In conclusion it is extraordinary that an institution with the prestige of Columbia University should publish such a work as the one under review without first giving it a thorough revision, eliminating its various inaccuracies, and modifying its exaggerated statements. If this had been done Dr. Chen's otherwise excellent and valuable treatise would justly deserve a far higher place in the world's literature than it is likely to attain.

F.

#### HOSKIER'S STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT VERSIONS<sup>1</sup>

In two stout volumes on the origin of the versions of the Gospels, (1910, 1911), Mr. Hoskier seeks to deal with the perplexing problem of textual variations in our oldest witnesses, and sets up the theory that

<sup>1</sup>Concerning the Genesis of the Versions of the N. T. Remarks suggested by the study of P and the Allied Questions as regards the Gospels. By H. C. Hoskier. 2 vols., xvi+469 and viii+423 pages. London: B. Quaritch, 1910, 1911.

Concerning the Date of the Bohairic Version: Covering a Detailed Examination of the Text of the Apocalypse and a Review of Some of the Writings of the Egyptian Monks. By H. C. Hoskier. viii+203 pages. London: B. Quaritch, 1911.